



Diaspora engagement mapping ZAMBIA

Facts & figures

Terminology: Zambia refers to its diaspora as 'Zambians abroad', and the term diaspora is also used.

Political rights



Dual citizenship¹



Right to vote in national elections
for citizens residing abroad²



Voting from abroad³



Remittances



Remittances as a share of GDP: **1.32%**

Remittances inflow (USD million): **334.31**

Data disclaimer

As diaspora definitions vary widely, we have chosen to use comparable data on emigration as a proxy. This does not include all who consider themselves diaspora and is not necessarily aligned with national definitions of diaspora. Emigration data comes from [UNDESA \(2024\)](#) and remittances from the [World Bank \(2024\)](#).

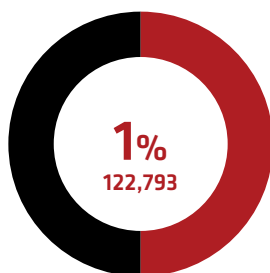
Emigration



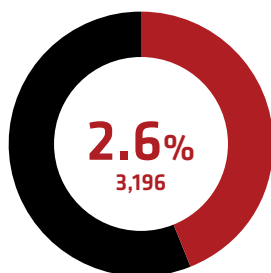
% of emigrants in
total population



% of which
in the EU



♂ 50%
♀ 50%



♂ 43.9%
♀ 56.1%

Top countries of destination



Zimbabwe	32,680
Malawi	30,614
South Africa	22,946
United Republic of Tanzania	8,289
Australia	8,060

1 Article 39 of the Constitution of 2016 sets out rules on dual citizenship and makes provisions for Zambians in the diaspora to acquire citizenship in their host country while retaining their home country citizenship as well. Full text available at: <http://www.parliament.gov.zm/sites/default/files/documents/bills/The%20Constitution%20of%20Zambia%20%28Ameement%29%20Bill%202019.pdf>. Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) Chief Electoral Officer Patrick Nshindano says the Commission is working towards actualizing diaspora voting ahead of the 2026 general elections. <https://www.lusakatimes.com/2020/10/25/ecz-committed-to-ensure-diaspora-voting-is-actualized-in-2026/>

2 Article 46 of the 2016 Constitution of Zambia http://www.parliament.gov.zm/sites/default/files/documents/amendment_act/Constitution%20of%20Zambia%20%20%28Amendment%29%2C%202016-Act%20No.%202_0.pdf

3 <https://elections.org.zm/voter-registration-info/>

Overview of the policy and legislative framework



- 2006** ● **Vision 2030** is the government's long-term development plan, with aspirations to be accomplished by the year 2030. Zambia's vision is to be "a prosperous middle-income nation by 2030". In Vision 2030, four of the seven principles (i, iii, vi, and vii) are linked with migration. Notably, however, this 2006 document makes no reference to 'diaspora', although it does refer to, for example, 'averting the migration of skilled manpower' (p.35), and there is scope for framing diaspora engagement policies in relation to this in the future.⁴
- 2014** ● **Revised Sixth National Development Plan 2013-2016** launched by the Ministry of Finance,⁵ the NDP sets out measures for strengthening the economy, in particular through growth in the export sector. It includes a single reference to diaspora, under 'Inter-sector linkages', noting the role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to "facilitate linkages with scientists and engineers in the Diaspora as well as to facilitate strategic agreements with international and partners in science, technology and innovation."⁶ It is unclear what progress was made in relation to this, but the subsequent Seventh National Development Plan (2019-2021) contains no references to diaspora, or even to migration.⁷
- 2017** ● **Seventh National Development Plan 2017-2021** launched by the Ministry of National Development Planning is the successor of the Revised Sixth National Development Plan under the central theme of "Accelerating development efforts towards the Vision 2030 without leaving anyone behind". While the document focuses on the strategic objectives of economic diversification, increasing human development and reducing inequality, there is no specific reference to the role of diasporas in the development process of the country.⁸
- 2019** ● **Zambia National Diaspora Policy.** In 2019, the Government of Zambia launched its National Diaspora Policy as a response to a request from the diaspora received in 2015.⁹ The overall objective of this policy is to integrate Zambians in the diaspora into the development agenda of the country by creating an enabling environment and platform for their effective participation in national development and in promoting their rights, interests and welfare abroad.
- The NDP includes policy statements in relation to increasing remittance flows and diaspora trade and investment with the country, as well as regarding access to land, and initiatives such as a diaspora database, although these have yet to be developed and implemented. The policy includes dual citizenship for Zambian Diaspora and their children born abroad, a key issue for members of the diaspora as well as lowering the cost of remittances.¹⁰
- All Zambian embassies worldwide have been tasked to ensure that they raise awareness among Zambians in the diaspora on the importance of this policy.¹¹

4 <https://www.zambiaembassy.org/document/the-vision-2030>

5 <https://www.gwp.org/globalassets/global/activities/impact-stories/supporting-documents/revised-sixth-national-development-plan.pdf>

6 Ibid.

7 Full text available at: <https://www.sdgphilanthropy.org/system/files/2019-02/7th-National-Development-Plan-Zambia.pdf>

8 https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/ressources/zambia_national_development_plan_2017-2021.pdf

9 https://www.mofaic.gov.zm/diaspora/?page_id=2918#:~:text=The%20overall%20objective%20of%20the,rights%2C%20interests%20and%20welfare%20abroad

10 <https://www.mofaic.gov.zm/diaspora/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/IOM-Diaspora-Policy-April-2019.pdf>

11 <https://zebru.org/2019/04/09/zambia-launches-diaspora-policy/>

- 2022** ● **Eighth National Development Plan 2022-2026** launched by the Ministry of Finance and National Planning is the updated National Development Plan under the central theme of “Socio economic Transformation for Improved Livelihoods”. Diaspora feature strongly under ‘enhanced citizenry participation in the economy’. The government plan to provide incentives for Zambians and Zambians living abroad with the aim that this will encourage enterprise development and job creation. The government also plan to strengthen the implementation of the Diaspora Policy to promote and facilitate increased remittances and investment.¹²
- 2025** ● The **2025 National Science, Technology and Innovation Policy**¹³ includes the diaspora as a key actor in high-value economic growth driven by the STI sector. It includes dedicated measures for diaspora engagement, such the mobilisation of local and international experts in the diaspora to strengthen human resource capacity in science, technology and innovation (Objective 6).

Practices

Explore 520+ practices by country, SDG or sector of engagement in the [interactive database!](#)



Partnership for Diaspora Skills Transfer in Health

The Zambia-UK Health Workforce Alliance (ZUKHWA) is a partnership between Guy's and St Thomas's NHS Foundation Trust, London, UK, and a network of Zambian-based and UK-based organisations who have experience as staff in UK health institutions. They work together to promote and improve the coordination and impact of Zambia-UK joint work in health in Zambia. The Alliance was launched in 2009.

Diaspora Humanitarian Response to Cyclones Idai & Kenneth

Along with other southern African diaspora, the Zambian diaspora worldwide helped mobilise resources, relief supplies, and coordinate local information with humanitarian agencies operating in the region in response to Cyclones Idai and Kenneth in 2019, as well as to assist in post-disaster reconstruction and economic recovery.¹⁴

Diaspora conference “Shifting Mindsets for Entrepreneurial Success” 2023

The aim was to broaden perspectives, unlock entrepreneurial potential, and invest in attendees personal future and that of Zambia's youth. The conference covered strategies for driving innovation in digital humanities insights into diaspora investment products and how to create intergenerational wealth. The proceeds from the fundraising gala were to benefit youth in Zambia.

Zambian Diaspora Web Portal

In 2024, the Zambian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), launched the Zambian Diaspora Web Portal as a central platform to connect with citizens abroad. The portal offers access to key government policies, investment and trade opportunities, and development programmes, reinforcing the government's commitment to recognising the diaspora as a vital contributor to national growth. The diaspora is encouraged to use the portal to stay informed, register online, and engage more actively in the country's development efforts.

12 <https://www.sh.gov.zm/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/EIGHTH-NATIONAL-DEVELOPMENT-PLAN-2022-2026-05-07-2022.pdf>

13 Ministry of Technology and Science (2025), 2025 National Science, Technology and Innovation Policy, <https://www.mots.gov.zm/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/2025-National-Science-Technology-and-Innovation-Policy.pdf>.

14 See https://diasporafordevelopment.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Diaspora-Case-Study-Crisis_EN-v.8.pdf. This was also one of the findings of a community consultation meeting organised in London by AFFORD in 2019 in relation to the diaspora's response to Cyclones Idai & Kenneth in April 2019

Zambian Diaspora Survey

The survey aims to explore interest in collaboration between local stakeholders and the Zambian diaspora in the UK, USA, Malawi and Zimbabwe. Topics explored in the survey include: main communication channels used to stay connected with Zambia; the level of trust with institutions (e.g. national government, local authorities, embassies/consulates, NGOs, international organisations); key challenges faced by the Zambian diaspora; areas of diaspora engagement respondents would be most interested in; and use of remittances. The research was commissioned by IOM Zambia and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MOFIC)."

>> Observations

The "Observations" and "Obstacles" sections contain additional information on the context of diaspora engagement that does not fit directly into the other sections. They are based on a combination of literature review and comments from the authors. New information is incorporated during the annual updates. Readers are invited to verify the relevance of the information at the time of reading, as the context may have evolved.

Since the early 2010s, the Zambian government has started to develop a more proactive approach to diaspora engagement,¹⁵ something that was arguably held back before by tensions with/towards its diaspora. If its primary motivation for doing so has been to harness diaspora contributions for national development, and in particular remittances flows, there is also a growing awareness of the diaspora's role as cultural ambassadors, promoting Zambia as a tourist destination.

The Zambian government is seeking increasingly to engage its diaspora as important national stakeholders, giving them routes to acquire Zambian citizenship and political representation. Enabling dual citizenship was a major policy move for the Zambian government in terms of its diaspora engagement, as this was an issue raised by many Zambian diaspora over the years as a barrier to their greater participation in the country's national development and civic participation. It promises to help rebuild trust between the diaspora and its government and strengthen family, civic and business ties with the diaspora and their countries of residence. However, while significant strides have been made in the area of citizenship, voting from abroad for the diaspora is not yet implemented in practice.

According to consultation meetings conducted as part of the Comic Relief Africa-UK programme in 2014, many Zambians in the diaspora have expressed willingness to return,¹⁶ even if on a short term basis, and this can be a powerful factor in engaging them for national development and skills transfer.

¹⁵ https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/zambian_diaspora_survey_06may_final.pdf

¹⁶ Personal communication, Comic Relief

Obstacles



- **Lack of trust** between the government and the diaspora has historically proved a barrier to greater engagement. There is an ongoing need to build trust and confidence between the two.
- **Lack of consular and e-services for diaspora** such as access to information about diaspora engagement schemes and programmes, or rights and entitlements of the diaspora, or services to promote greater diaspora investment into Zambia act as a barrier to their engagement in national development.
- **Inadequate data** on diaspora demographics makes diaspora engagement more difficult.

Annex:

List of Actors

Explore the institutionalisation of diaspora engagement worldwide via the [typology of 520+ institutions](#)

Diaspora related institutions

- **At regional level**

African Union Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (AU-CIDO)

Zambia nominates a diaspora focal point to the African Union Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (AU-CIDO) Continental Meetings

Southern African Development Community (SADC)

Zambia is a founding member of the SADC which is an inter-governmental organization headquartered in Gaborone, Botswana. Its goal is to further socio-economic cooperation and integration as well as political and security cooperation among 16 southern African countries

East African Community (EAC) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)

Zambia is a member of both communities.

- **National institutions**
 - At ministerial level

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for the formulation and administration of Zambia's Foreign Policy; International Relations and diaspora engagement and coordinates Zambia's Diplomatic and Consular Missions abroad.



Diaspora organisations in Europe

Diaspora Connect: Buying Property in Zambia

Development activities

A property platform to facilitate diaspora to buy/invest in property in Zambia.

Diaspora for African Development (DfAD) UK

Development activities

DfAD is a UK registered diaspora-led non-profit organisation whose aim is to contribute to Africa's sustainable social and economic development through harnessing the potential of the African diaspora for development. It supports education, healthcare and agriculture in Zambia and undertakes policy advocacy and awareness-raising on Zambian issues.

Zambians in the UK

Zambians in the UK is a diaspora news and business website serving the Zambian diaspora worldwide.

Read more about diaspora organisations
in "[Starting guide: What is a diaspora
organisation](#)"



Original research:
AFFORD (2020)
Editing & update:
EUDiF (2026)



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